

The background of the slide features several flags flying against a clear blue sky. On the left, the flag of the European Union is visible, characterized by twelve yellow stars arranged in a circle on a blue field. In the center and right, the flag of Slovakia is prominent, which consists of a white triangle at the top, a red triangle at the bottom, and a blue shield in the center containing a white cross and a blue cloud. The flags are attached to tall, dark poles.

*THE EUROPEAN POLICIES OF
SLOVAKIA*

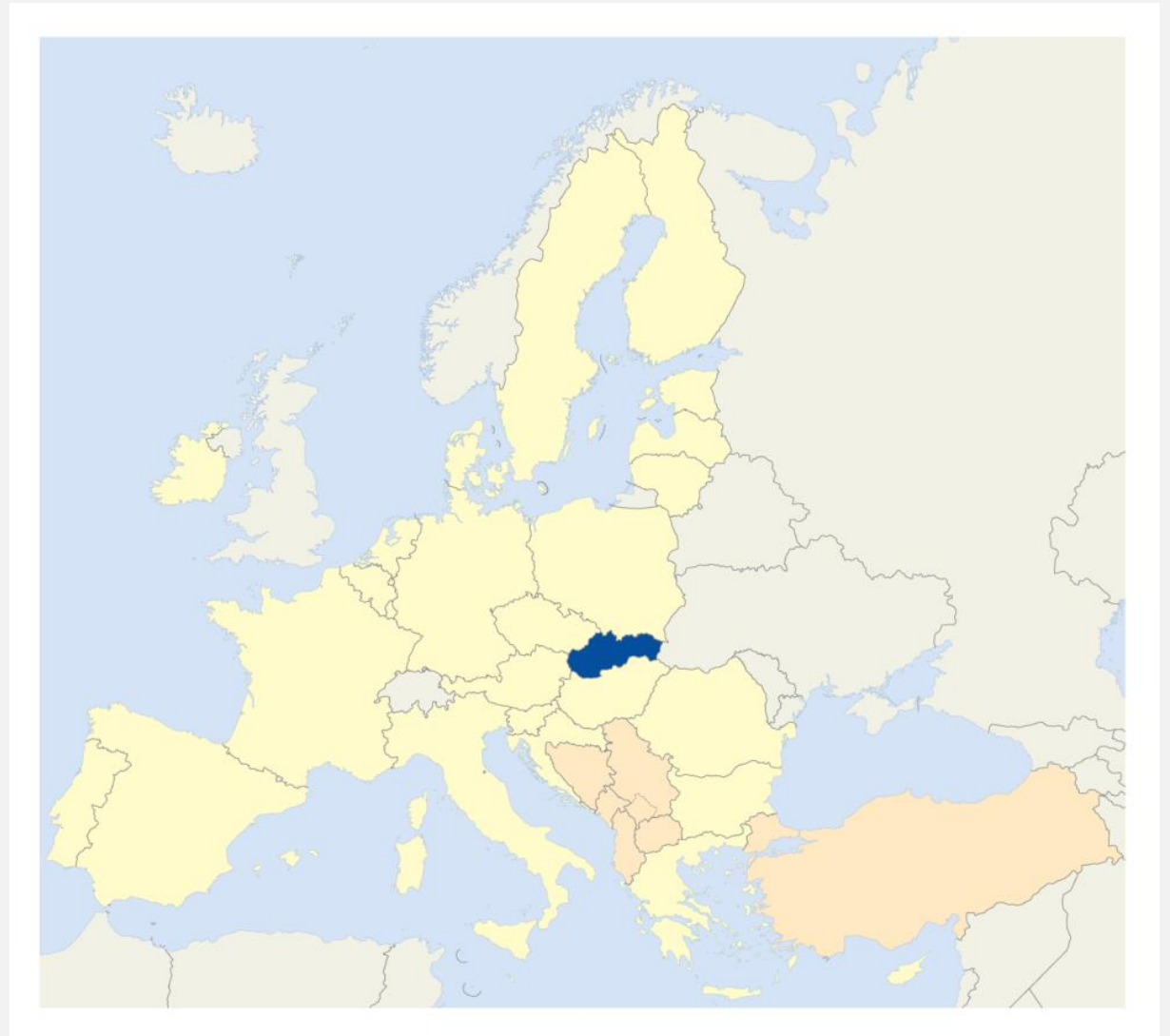
LAYOUT

- I. Slovakia's profile: factors shaping its European policies
- II. The European policies of Slovakia
- III. Current challenges

I. SLOVAKIA'S PROFILE

A) The place on the map

- Landlocked country in central Europe
- Borders with EU states (Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary) and non-EU states (Ukraine)
→ way-in in the EU



B) Population and size

- Population: 5.4 millions inhabitants

→ 18th European country, 1,2% of EU population

- Low birth rate : decrease of the population.

- Ethnic diversity :

- majority of slovaks (80%),

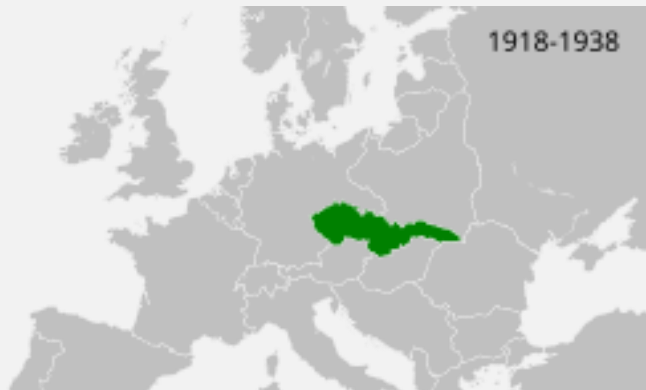
- minorities of hungarians (8,5%), roms (2%), czechs, ruthenians, ukrainians, germans.

- Size: 49.035 km²

→ 20th European country

C) The history

- 10th cent : part of the Hugarian kingdom as “upper Hungary”
- **1718:** Austria-Hungary empire, Habsburg monarchy



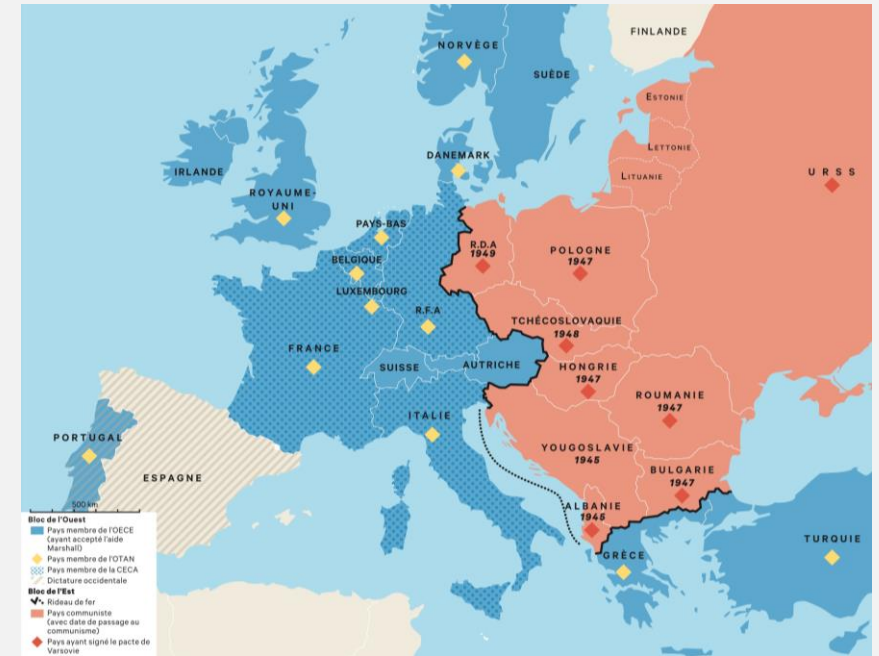
- **1939-1945:** independence of Slovakia, client state of Nazi Germany
- **1945:** reunification of Czechoslovakia after WW2



- **1918 :** creation of Czechoslovakia after WWI



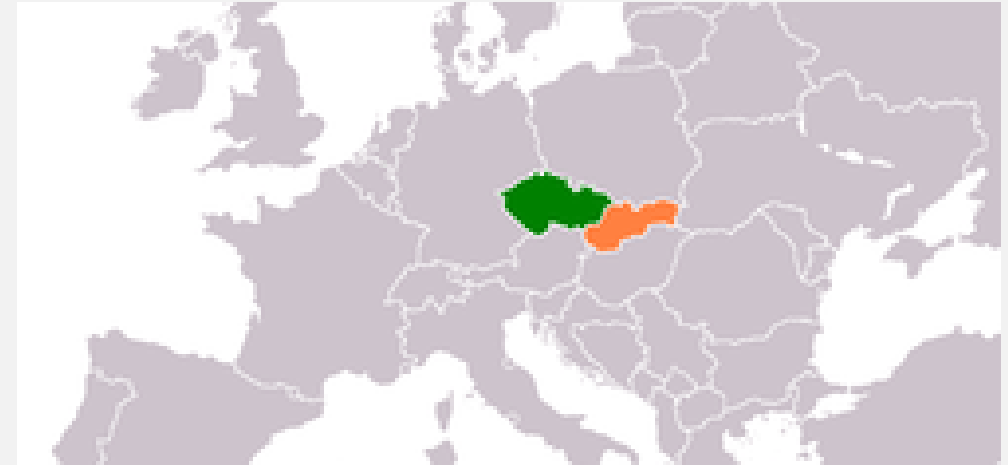
- **1948:** Communist coup d'état → soviet satellite state
- **1968:** Prague spring → mass protest against the communist rule, brief period of political and economic liberalization



Protest in Bratislava in 1989

- **1989** : “Velevet revolution” → end of the communist rule in Czechoslovakia
- **1991**: creation of the VISEGRAD group with Hungary and Poland.

- **1991**: “Velvet divorce” → split of Czechoslovakia :
Czech Republic / Slovak republic



- **1993** : member of the United nations



- **2004**: member of NATO and the EU

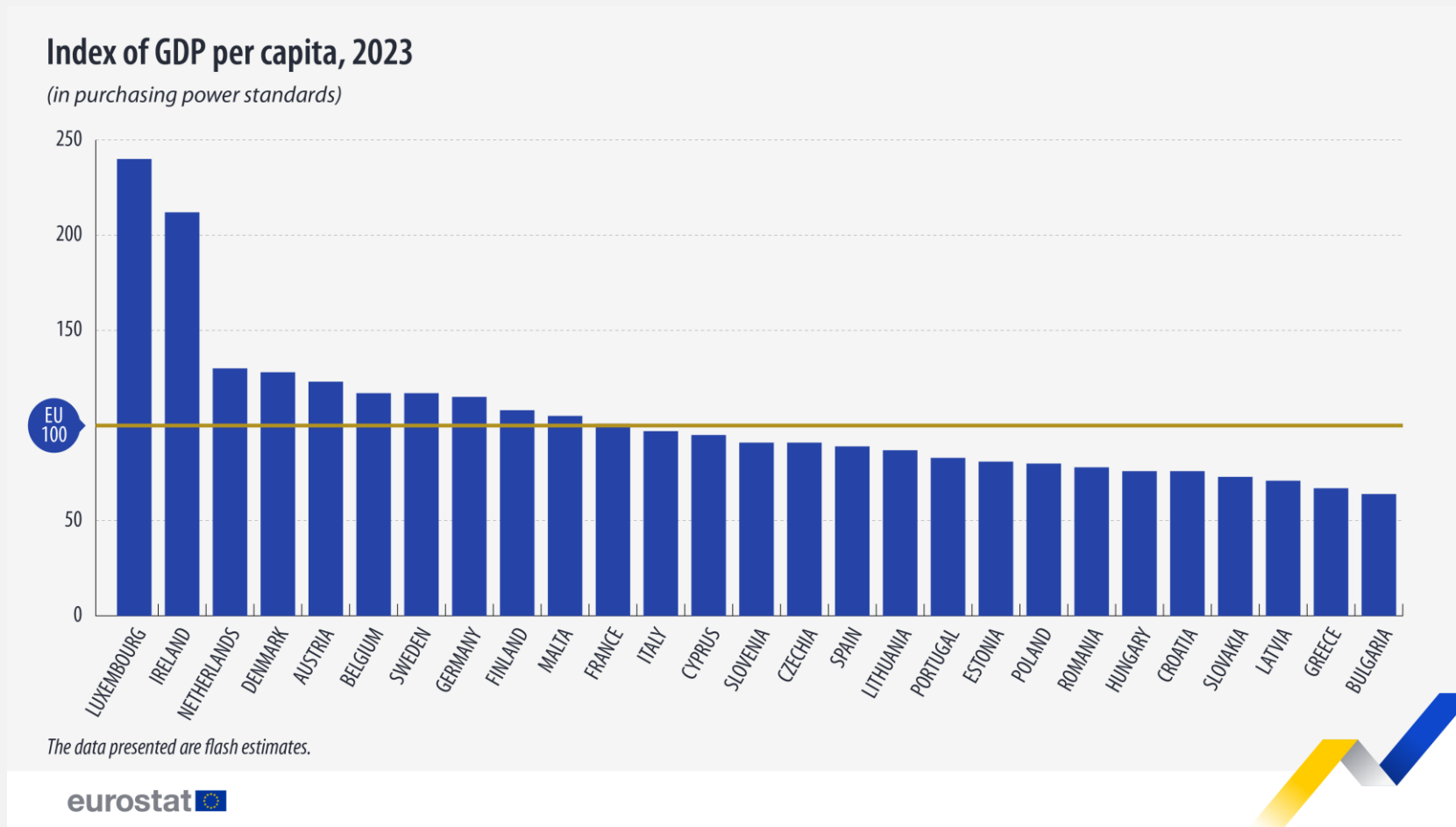


- **2007**: member of the Schengen area

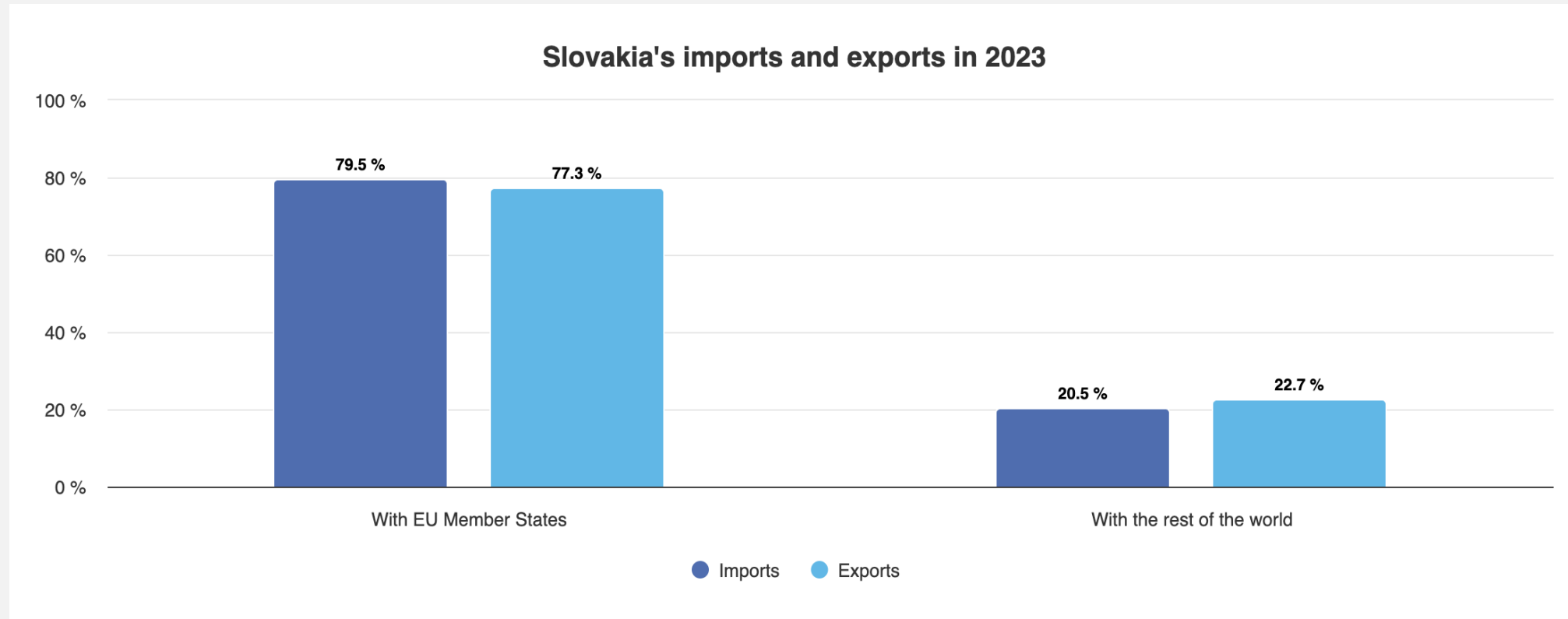
- **2009**: member of the Eurozone

D) A small but specialized and opened economy

- GDP/ capita of €27 000 → below EU average (€37 600). It accounts for 0,7% of EU economy.



- Almost 80% of its exportation is towards the EU (first partner is Germany, with 17% of exportation)



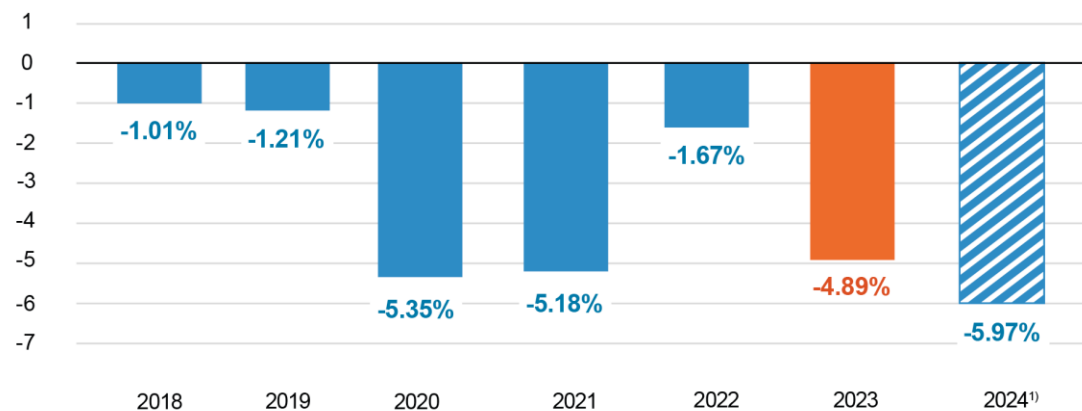
- Specialized economy: car industry = 42% of exportation, 50% of production.

- Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic: increase of the unemployment rate to 6,7% (from 5,7% in 2019).
- Public deficit : 5,2% of GDP in 2023
- Public debt: 60% of GDP.

Deficit of the general government sector in the SR as of 1 April 2024



(in % of GDP)



¹⁾ plan by the approved general government budget of the Ministry of Finance of the SR

E) Domestic politics

- Parliamentary republic



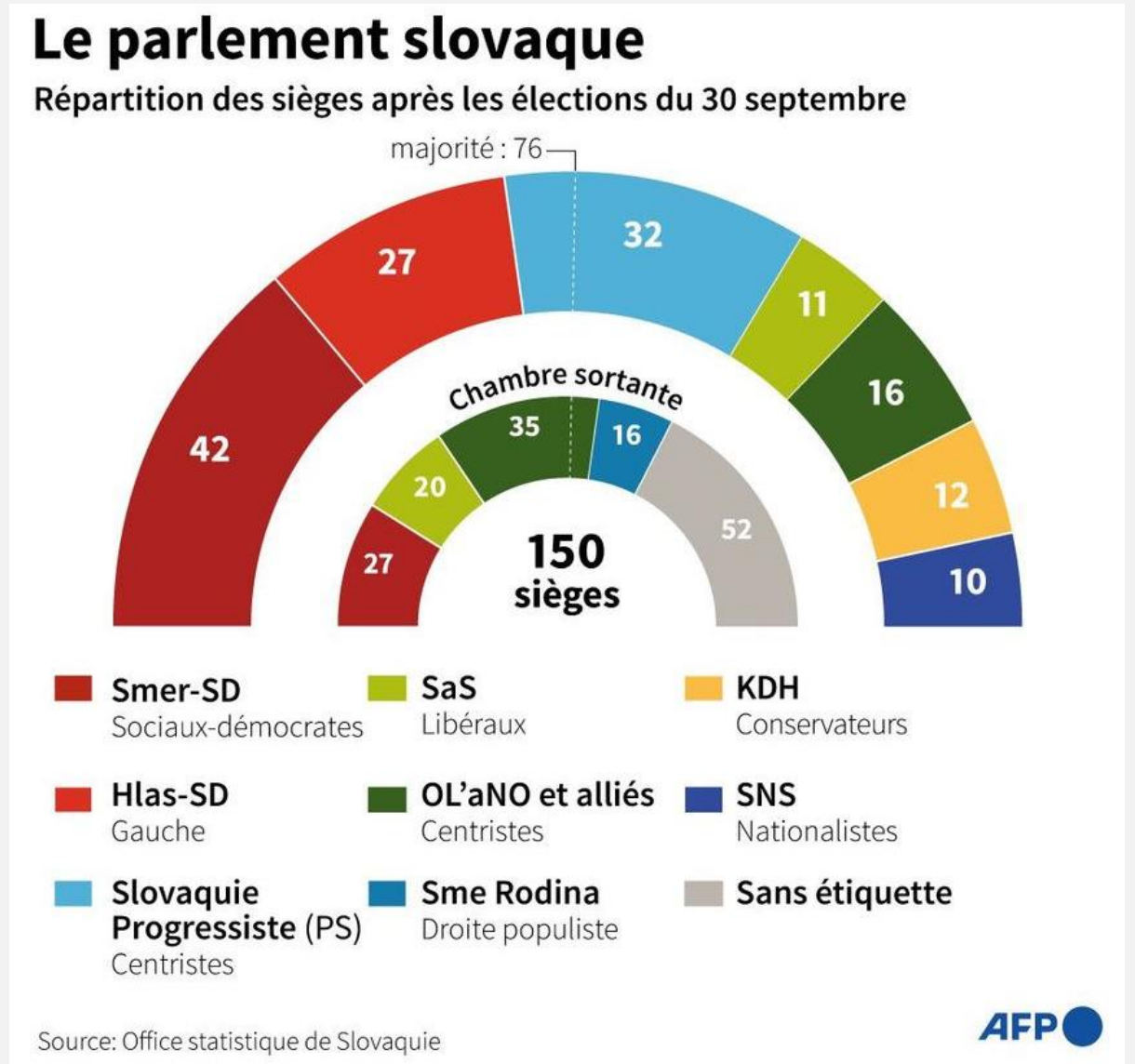
President of the Republic :
Peter Pellegrini (since June 2024)



Prime minister :
Robert Fico (since September 2023)

- Unicameral parliament = National Council of the Slovak Republic
 - 150 deputies, elected for 4 years
 - proportional representation
 - minimum threshold of 5% votes.

- Last parliamentary election : september 30, 2023.
- Results :
 - Majority of **SMER-SD** with 42 seats.
 - Coalition with **HLAS-SD** (scission of SMER SD) and **National Slovak Party** (far right, ultranationalist party) → 76 deputies.
 - **Robert Fico** : leader of SMER SD, critical position toward the EU, close to Russia.



- European parliament : 15 seats (since 2024)

European group	Renew Europe	EPP Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)	ESN (Europe of Sovereign Nations)	Non Attached Members		
Slovakia party	Progressive Slovakia	Christian Democratic Movement	Republika	Republika	Voice – Social Democracy	SMER SD
Seats in 2024	6	1	1	1	1	5
% votes in 2024	27,82	7,15	12,5		7,18	24,7
Seats in 2019	2	2	new		new	3

II. SLOVAKIA'S EUROPEAN POLICIES

A) Why enter the European project ?

Application

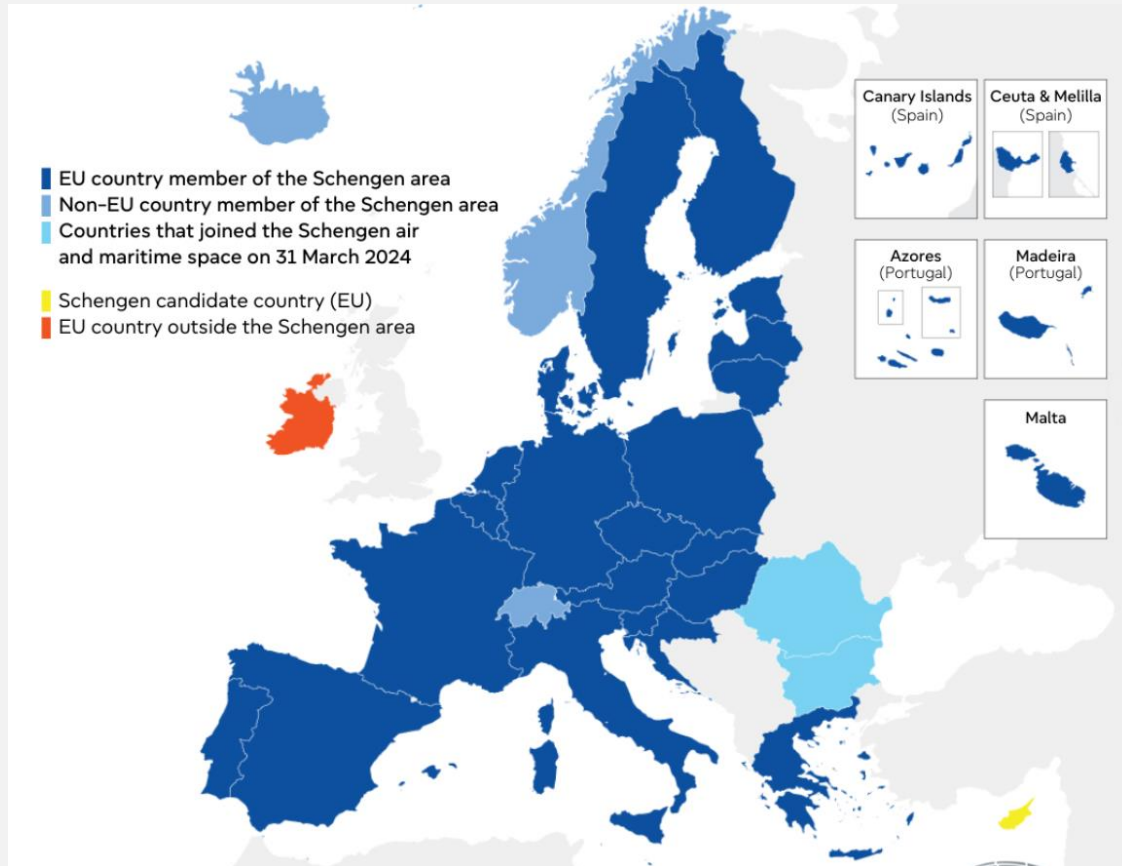
- Beginning of the process in 1993 : joined the VISEGRAD group to prepare the integration.
- June 27, 1995 : submission of its EU membership application.
- Complicated process → the EU commission was not favorable at first.
- 2003 : referendum on EU membership → high “euro-enthusiasm” with 92,5% voting “yes” (voter turnout of 52%).
- 2004 : Slovakia joined the EU

Reasons

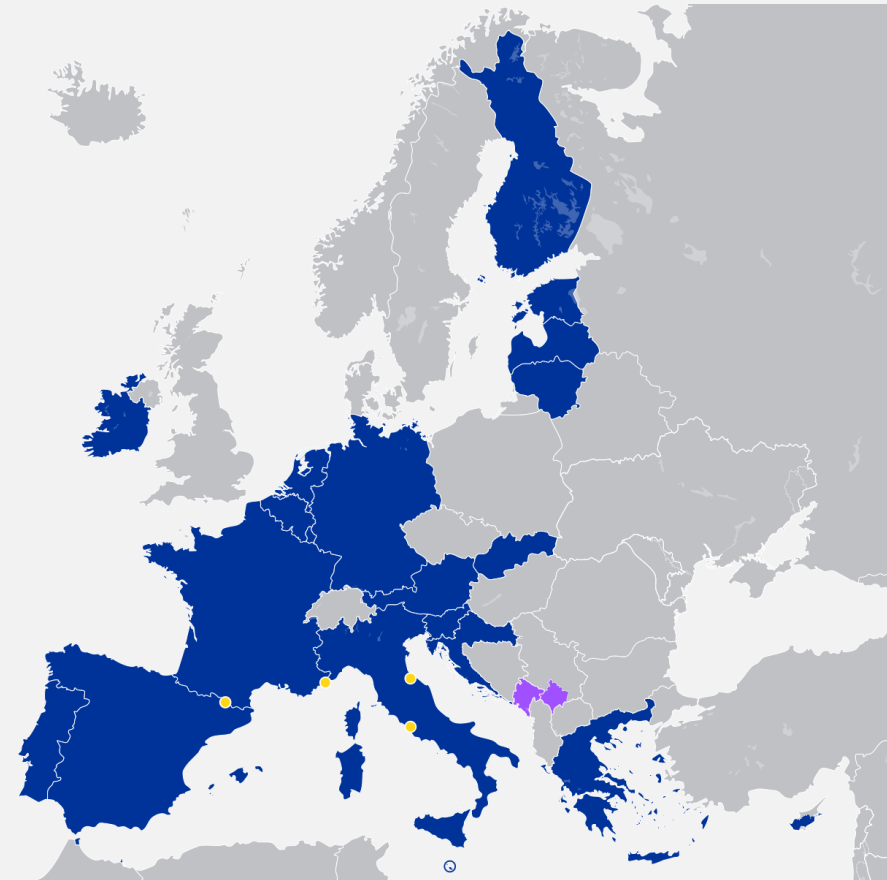
- Economic development.
- Political and democratic stability

- Full integration in the EU :

Member of the Schengen area since 2007



Member of the Eurozone since 2009



B) What Europe ?

- Long considered a “success story” among the new member states → economic growth, integration into EU structures, alignment with European values.
- The EU budget:
 - Net beneficiary of the EU budget → 80% of Slovak public investment involves EU funds.
 - Slovakia supports maintaining a strong EU budget.
- Security and defence policy :
 - NATO member
 - Participates in the Common Security and Defence Policy and PESCO.
- EU enlargement
 - Support of the enlargement in the Western Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia)
 - Skeptical of Turkey’s accession : security and migration concerns.

III. CURRENT CHALLENGES

A) The rule of law crisis

2023: election of **Robert Fico** as prime minister

- Attack on anti-corruption institutions
- Judicial independence concerns
- Media freedom under threat
 - 2018: murder of the journalist Jàn Kuciak



EU response : warning of the EU Parliament to the slovak government, threat of freezing european funds.

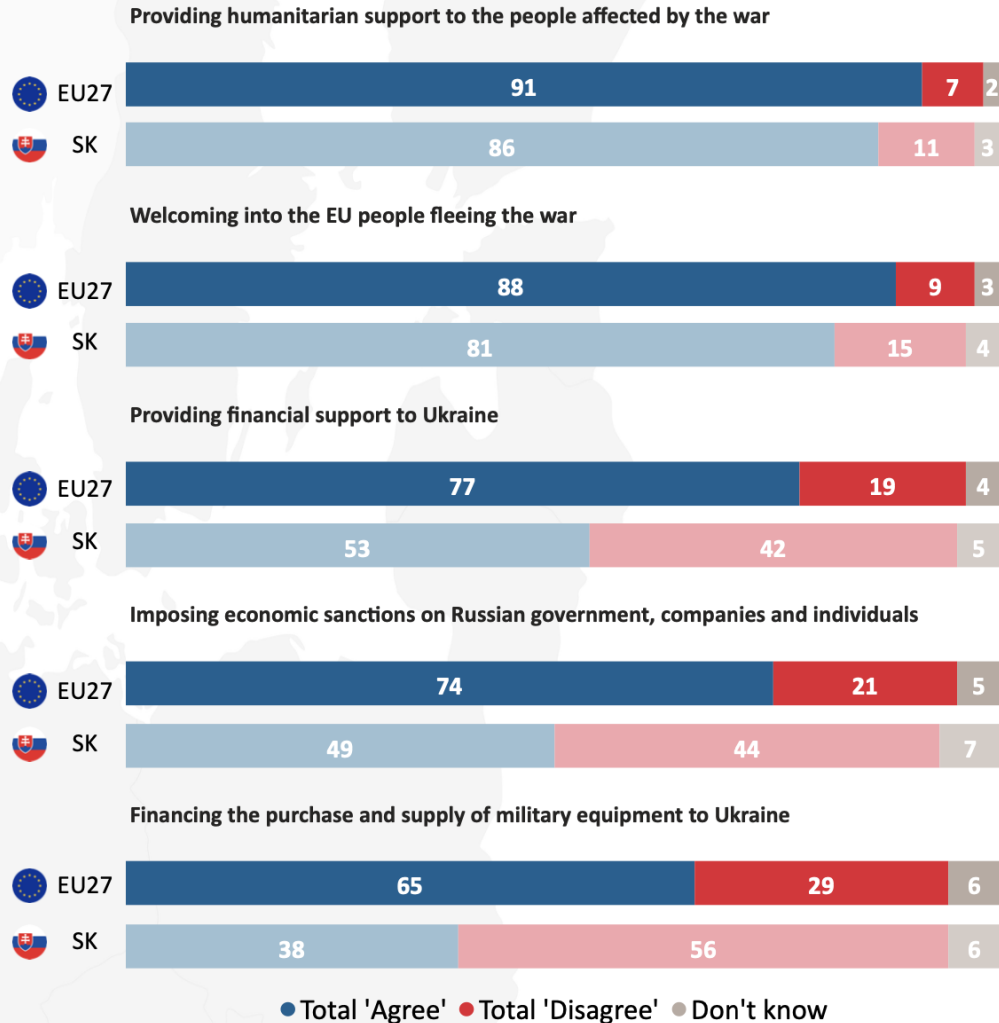
B) The Ukraine—Russia war

- Economic and social implication :
 - Dependency on energy from Russia (gas and oil).
 - Bordering Ukraine : key transit and host country for Ukrainian refugees.
- Beginning of the war, strong support for Ukraine : military and humanitarian aid, EU and NATO alignment.
- Shift under Robert Fico: opposition to military aid, pro russian narratives, friction with EU ans NATO
- Today : polarisation of the civil society



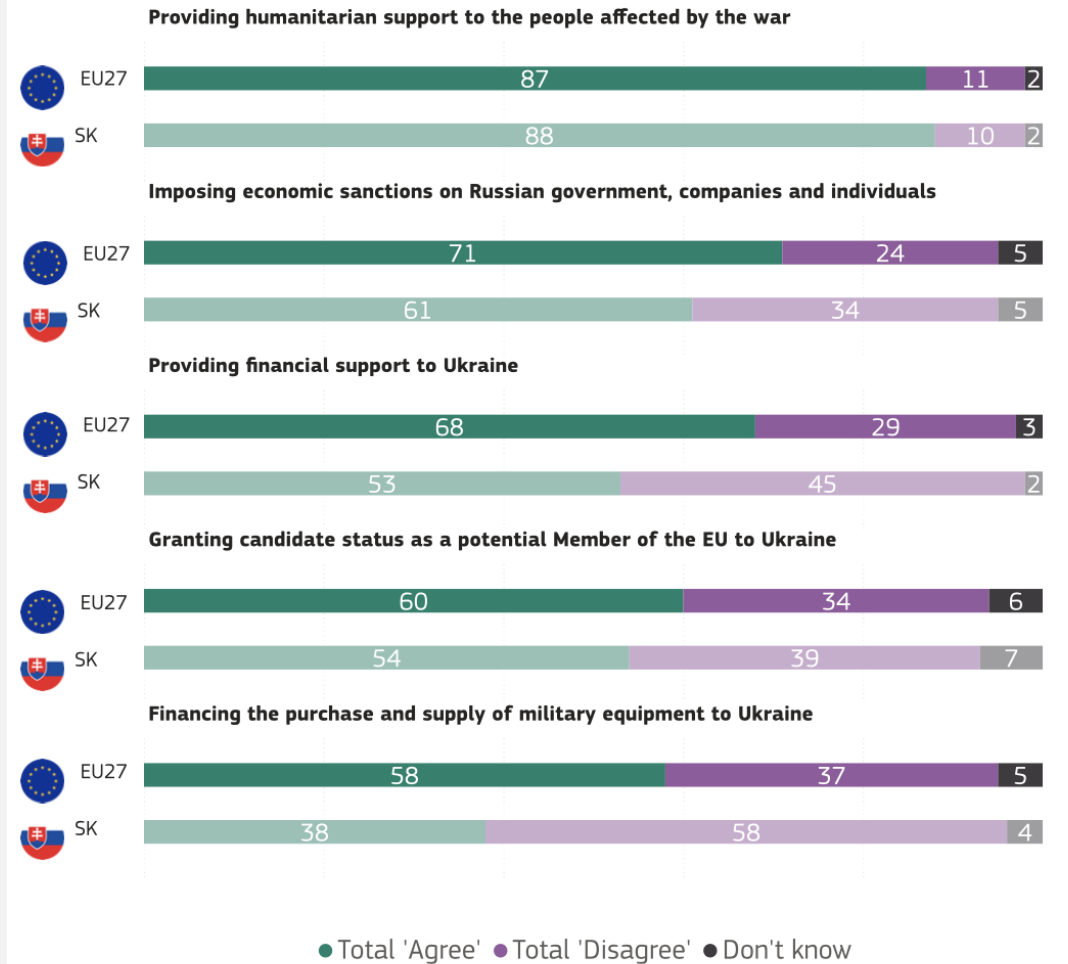
Eurobarometer winter 2022-2023

QE2. The EU has taken a series of actions as a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To what extent you agree or disagree with each of these actions taken. (%)



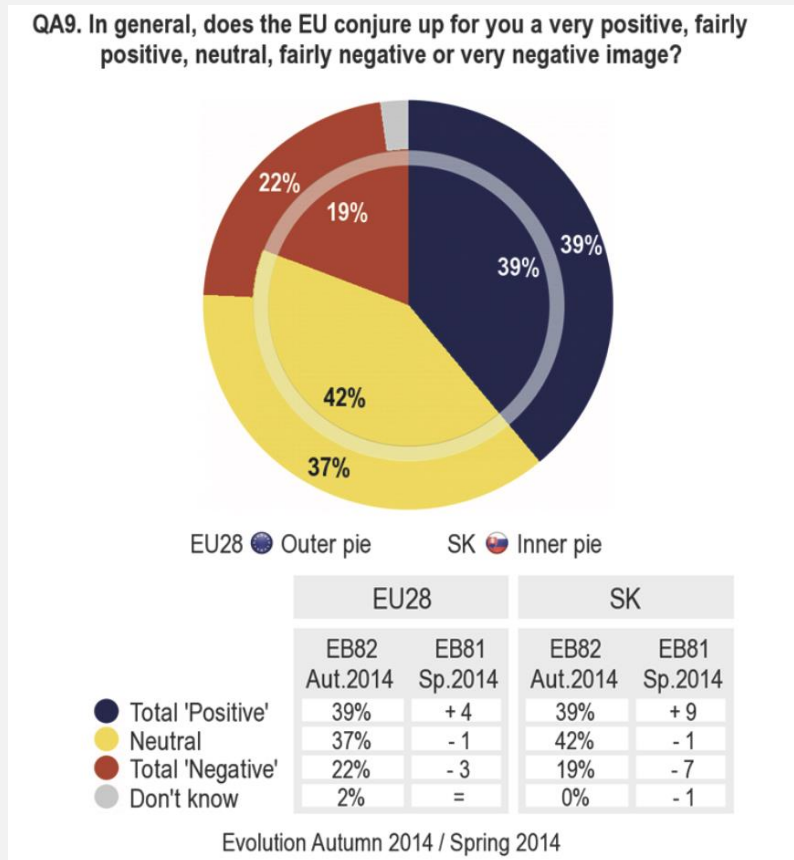
Eurobarometer autumn 2024

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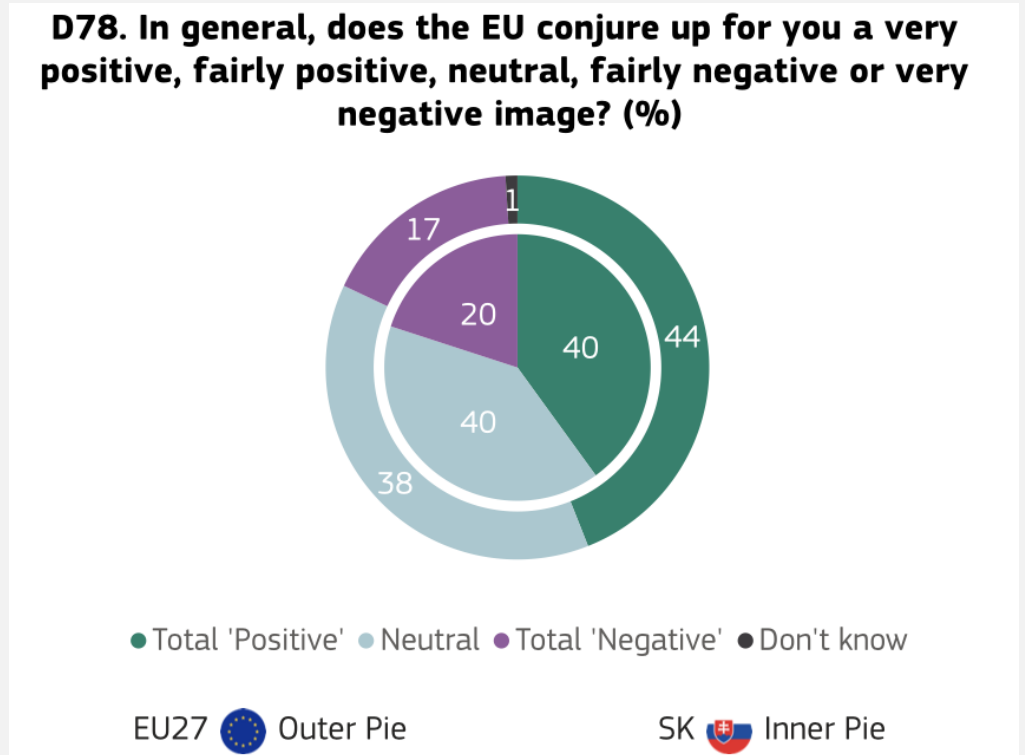


C) Euroscepticism

- Strong European enthusiasm in the 2000s → shift in 2015 during the refugee crisis.



Eurobarometer autumn 2014



Eurobarometer autumn 2024

Erosceptic party : SNS

- Born in 1989
- Fascist, ultranationalist and extreme right party.
- 2023 elections :
 - 10 seats in Parliament,
 - In the government coalition.
- SNS on the EU
 - Not against Slovakia's european membership, but advocates for a Europe strong nation-states.
 - Criticizes the EU's overreach in areas such as judicial independence, cultural policies and energy matters.
 - Called for stronger security measures against illegal immigration on EU external borders, opposed EU asylum quotas
 - Opposes Ukrainian EU membership.

